



13 May 2020

Dear friends in the Lord,

"We need to get this right, not rushed."

Many of you have probably seen the bishop's letter that was released Friday, May 8, 2020 that discusses the gradual re-opening of public liturgies in the Diocese of Gary. Bishop McClory has expressed caution and restraint and that we should continue livestreaming as long as possible in order to keep the Faithful safe. Some have read his letter and seen immediacy, but churches will not be open for "walk-ins" for quite some time still.

The team here has reviewed the guidelines and have decided that we are going to move forward in phases. Phase 1 will maintain a daily livestream of Mass at 10 AM and our "public" Sunday 10 AM celebration will focus on those who were supposed to receive their sacraments during this pandemic.

- Our first "public" Mass will be on Sunday, May 31 for the Feast of Pentecost in order to welcome into the Church those in RCIA. It will be limited to their immediate families living in the same household and their sponsor.
- Throughout the Sundays of June, we will focus on First Communion families. These families will be broken into four separate groups and will be limited to their immediate families living in the same household.
- We are restricting the number of Masses and participants so that we can keep everyone safe, so that we have time to properly sanitize the buildings before and after each use, and so that our entire community can be "together" as we witness and support these families as they celebrate these sacraments for which they have been patiently preparing.

People might be confused as to why such restrictions. The physical limitations of our church is very real and on a normal basis we pack people in as much as possible. We have to ensure that no one is closer than six feet from another unless, of course, they are living in the same household. We already did the measurements and our church is going to accommodate only 40 people in order to comply with the social distancing requirements and will require a screening process before anyone enters the building.

As a basic rule no one should be attending Mass who is:

1. Running a fever
2. Sneezing and coughing
3. Feeling ill
4. Over the age of 65

These restrictions are for your safety as well as the safety of the others in attendance.

Those who come to church must:

1. Wear a face mask upon entry
2. Immediately sanitize their hands.
3. Keep their face mask on throughout Mass
4. Receive Communion only in the hands
5. Leave the building immediately after Mass

It will be necessary to sanitize the church after Mass, thus, we will not be able to gather and visit with one another after Mass in the church or in the parking lot.

All of these safeguards will remain until we are told otherwise by the diocese. As we come closer to the end of Phase 1, our team will reconvene in order to discuss Phase 2 with regard to incorporating more people at daily and Sunday Masses. Thank you for being patient and we will let you know when we are able to have "walk-ins" for Mass once again. I know that this is difficult; it is difficult for me as well, but we are in unprecedented times and it will require us to shift how we live in order to keep ourselves and others safe.

Please remember that the bishops of Indiana have dispensed all the faithful from the Sunday obligation until August 15, 2020. That may be increased if precautions are still necessary. We still encourage you to join us through live-streaming at 10 AM every single day. And remember the church is open from 8 am - 8 pm for private prayer with the exception of the 10 am hour.

Please know that these decisions are not taken lightly and we are doing everything in our control to provide a safe and healthy environment for everyone.

I love you and miss you!

Faithfully yours in the Lord,



Fr. Chris Stanish